

ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM

DEDICATED TO PROFESSIONAL ANIMAL CARE.

Volume I, Number 1

November, 1974

EDITORIAL COMMENT *by Dave Ruhter*

Among zoo keepers, as with very few other professions, there exists a void in intraprofessional communications. If you are fortunate enough to have access to zoo magazines or occasionally obtain an AAZPA Newsletter, you can find out what's going on in the zoo world. But what's happening among keepers at Denver or Brookfield? When was the last time you heard of new programs at Tulsa or Los Angeles? As problems come up, have you ever wondered what your fellow professionals are doing in similar situations? This is what Animal Keepers' Forum is all about. We are offering to you a vehicle of communication with topics that concern and interest keepers.

For too long the position of animal keeper was considered one of life's more deplorable jobs. Animal Keepers' Forum hopes to improve the keeper's image not only among zoo people but to the public at large. As the person in daily contact with animals, often worth thousands of dollars, your ability determines the quality of their care. For this reason we hope to make Animal Keepers' Forum an educational medium. Techniques and skills that can be helpful in the care of your animals will be emphasized. If you have trade secrets, we encourage you to send them to Animal Keepers' Forum so that they can be shared with others. The more knowledgeable you are, the more valuable you are to your animals and to your zoo.

Your newsletter will not be written by a few individuals; it will be a composite of articles sent in by keepers, by you. We have no torch to burn; we simply want you to make a positive contribution to the field of animal keeping. Long range plans include a journal of technical articles written by keepers, but the monthly newsletter is to keep in touch. Let us know what's happening and we will, in turn, keep you in touch with what's happening elsewhere.

"Animal Keepers' Forum" is an independent, nonprofit, nonpolitical, professional newsletter with no affiliation to any organization. There will not be a membership fee, but we will operate from a simple subscription rate of five dollars (\$5.00) per year. The newsletter will be compiled and edited in Topeka and then sent to St. Paul, Mn for printing and distribution.

Subscription to "Animal Keepers' Forum" is open to anyone interested in zoos and animals. The AKF is designed

primarily as a communication device for professional animal keepers and a tool for keeper education. However, articles in the newsletter will be informative not only to animal keepers but also to anyone interested in the management of wild animals in captivity and the functions of a modern zoological park.

If you wish to subscribe, please send check or money order along with current address to: Animal Keepers' Forum, 8415 Bacardi Av. W., Inver Grove Heights, Mn. 55075.

NEWS FROM MINNESOTA by Rick Steenberg

Minnesota and its residents have really taken zoos seriously. This year has seen major reconstruction at the Duluth Zoo, providing more spacious and attractive quarters for fewer animals.

St. Paul's Como Zoo has acquired a Society dedicated to its improvement, which recently held a seminar on the future of the zoo. They came up with a master plan for the improvement of Como Zoo, with major emphasis on the economical use of the limited space available. Despite severe budget cuts for 1975, the future looks bright.

Construction has begun on the new Minnesota Zoological Garden, with the well, perimeter fence and grading underway at this time. A zoo where people will "walk in an animal world," it promises to be a spectacular-and-a-half!

You'll note, too, that this newsletter is also published in Minnesota. It is printed on machinery belonging to Mrs. Vi Crawford, Secretary to the Minnesota Zoological Board, operators of the new MZG; it is done in the offices of the Minnesota Zoological Society and is sent out with the help and cooperation of the Como Zoo Docents. We certainly appreciate the kindness of the above people - the "Animal Keepers' Forum" couldn't exist without them. We thank them all.

"Animal Keepers' Forum" is a monthly newsletter dedicated to professional animal keeping. The newsletter will contain news items about zoos, exhibits, animals and people. We hope to print short articles and editorials concerning zoo keepers as professionals. We will also include articles on keeper education, docent programs, keeper participation in various phases of zoo operation, zoological society functions, research in zoos, conservation programs, public education, community service programs and career opportunities.

Our most urgent need is news items and articles. The AKF will cover a wide range of topics to allow everyone an almost endless choice of subjects for articles. "Animal Keepers' Forum" is interested in your ideas and experiences. Your observations and skills are of vital importance to other keepers. New animal keepers and zoo volunteers with little or no experience can benefit from your knowledge and education, both formal and informal.

The "Animal Keepers' Forum" will be a medium for open discussion between all zoo professionals. We will feature guest editorials from zoo administrators and publish letters to the editor in response. If you have ideas for the newsletter, would like to write a column or need information, please let us know. All suggestions will be considered and we will also publish requests for animal data and information. All articles are subject to editing and, if published, may not necessarily reflect the views of the AKF staff.

Please send news items and articles to: AKF Editorial Staff, c/o Topeka Zoological Park, 635 Gage Blvd., Topeka, KS 66606.

TOPEKA RECEIVES AAZPA EXHIBIT AWARD

The American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, through its Honors and Awards Committee, has established an Exhibit Award to recognize and honor an outstanding achievement in the area of exotic animal display, exhibit design, and innovation.

The first annual Exhibit Award of the AAZPA was presented to the Topeka Zoological Park for its Tropical Rain Forest.

This exhibit is unique in that it is devoted to a single ecological concept, the tropical rain forest. The visitor to Topeka's exhibit will have an opportunity to see tropical animals living together in a carefully developed, delicately balanced bio-community.

The Tropical Rain Forest incorporates and interrelates live animals, plants, habitat settings, climatic conditions and cultural artifacts. Visitors are exposed to interpretive graphics and audio-visual materials as they participate in this sensory and educational experience.

The Award was accepted by Gary K. Clarke, Director, during an awards banquet held Thursday, October 3, at the Marriot Hotel in Philadelphia.

KEEPER LUNCH PROGRAM AT SEDGWICK COUNTY ZOO by Jim Fouts

Early in October of this year, the Sedgwick County Zoo assumed management of the Zoo Restaurant. It was then decided to try a lunch program as interest was high among employees.

Lunch is provided daily for keepers and other zoo employees at special prices. The menu offered is changed daily with many items available. A typical lunch may be a hot beef or ham sandwich, potato chips and drink for 75¢. Some days chili, macaroni and cheese, homemade chicken and noodles, or any other variety of foods may be offered. Special plates are even prepared for our resident vegetarians! The price ranges according to preparation expense and is not intended to be profitable, but provide a service for employees. These items are also offered to the public at a higher rate.

The program has been very well received by all zoo employees and will be continued. Due to the success of this program, we would highly recommend it for other zoos and aquariums.

FROM THE AKF STAFF

This first issue of "Animal Keepers' Forum" is a complimentary copy. We have sent newsletters to as many keepers as feasible. However, it is certain that many professional keepers will not receive this newsletter. If you know of someone at your zoo who would be interested, please lend them your copy of the newsletter or write AKF for more copies to be distributed at your zoo or aquarium.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and we look forward to hearing your comments. We urge everyone to send in your subscription as soon as possible to avoid missing the next issue of "Animal Keepers' Forum" in December.



SUGGESTED READING

National Wildlife Vol. 12, No. 6, Oct.-Nov. 1974, pp. 5-12, George Reigers, "Living Room Zoos."

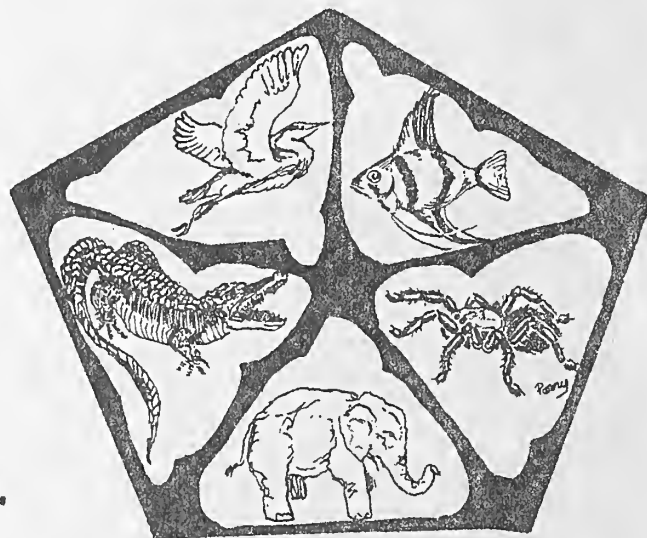
"United States List of Endangered Fauna", a new publication of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Copies may be obtained by writing Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Endangered Species, Washington, D.C. 20240

Game Bird Breeders' Gazette Vol. 33, No. 5, May 1974, Pg. 38, Dr. Rolando, Romero D., "Red-fronted Macaw." An interesting article about one of the rarest psittacines in the world.

Playgirl Vol. II, No. 6, Nov. 1974, Pg. 106, Cleveland Amory, "The Most-Persecuted List."

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